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SUBJECT: UN ELECTORAL ASSISTANCE CONSULTATIONS IN
TIMOR-LESTE

¶1. (SBU) The UN's Electoral Assistance Division hosted a discussion August 31 in New York on electoral assistance to Timor-Leste. Finn Reske-Nielsen, newly named deputy SRSG (Reconstruction, Development, Humanitarian Affairs) to Timor-Leste, outlined his plan to closely coordinate with local Embassies and international organizations in Dili. In advance of nation-wide elections planned for April or May 2007, Reske-Nielsen said the Timorese government suffered from "serious capacity constraints" and called for the donor community to coordinate closely in the run-up to the elections. The UN presence, drawing on UNSCR 1704, will focus on providing technical electoral and developmental assistance and on ensuring that elections are free and fair. Thirty international electoral specialists are currently co-located with Timorese officials, and two waves of UN monitors are planned in advance of the elections.

¶2. (SBU) Representatives from Australia, Brazil, Portugal, the European Commission, USUN, UNDP and IFES echoed Reske-Nielsen's call for close coordination on the ground in Dili. The Brazilian and Portuguese representatives urged the UN to proactively identify electoral needs, and expressed interest in sending their nationals as UN monitors. UN officials from the Electoral Assistance Division and Peacekeeping Operations said they would work to mirror international cooperation in Dili with regular contact among interested parties in New York.
BOLTON